

REMARKS

Applicants have amended claims 1, 8, and 15 and cancelled claims 2-7, 9-14, and 16-20 to remove these claims from further consideration in this application. Applicants are not conceding in this application that those claims are not patentable, as the present claim amendments and cancellations are only for facilitating expeditious prosecution of the present application. Applicants respectfully reserve the right to pursue these and other claims in one or more continuations and/or divisional patent applications.

Applicants have made every effort to present claims which distinguish over the prior art, and it is believed that all claims are in condition for allowance. However, Applicants invite the Examiner to call the undersigned if it is believed that a telephonic interview would expedite the prosecution of the application to an allowance. Accordingly, and in view of the foregoing remarks, Applicants hereby respectfully request prompt allowance of the pending claims.

Although Applicants believe that all claims are in condition for allowance, the Examiner is directed to the following statement found in M.P.E.P. § 706(II):

When an application discloses patentable subject matter and it is apparent from the claims and the applicant's arguments that the claims are intended to be directed to such patentable subject matter, but the claims in their present form cannot be allowed because of defects in form or omission of a limitation, the examiner should not stop with a bare objection or rejection of the claims. The examiner's action should be constructive in nature and when possible should offer a definite suggestion for correction. (emphasis added)

To the extent necessary, a petition for an extension of time under 37 C.F.R. § 1.136 is hereby made. Please charge any shortage in fees due in connection with the filing of this paper,

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including extension of time fees, to Deposit Account 503839, and please credit any excess fees to such deposit account.

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Respectfully submitted,

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